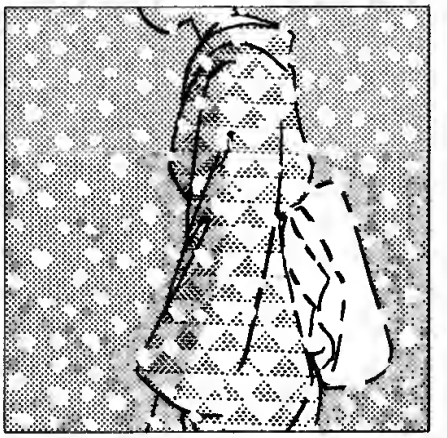
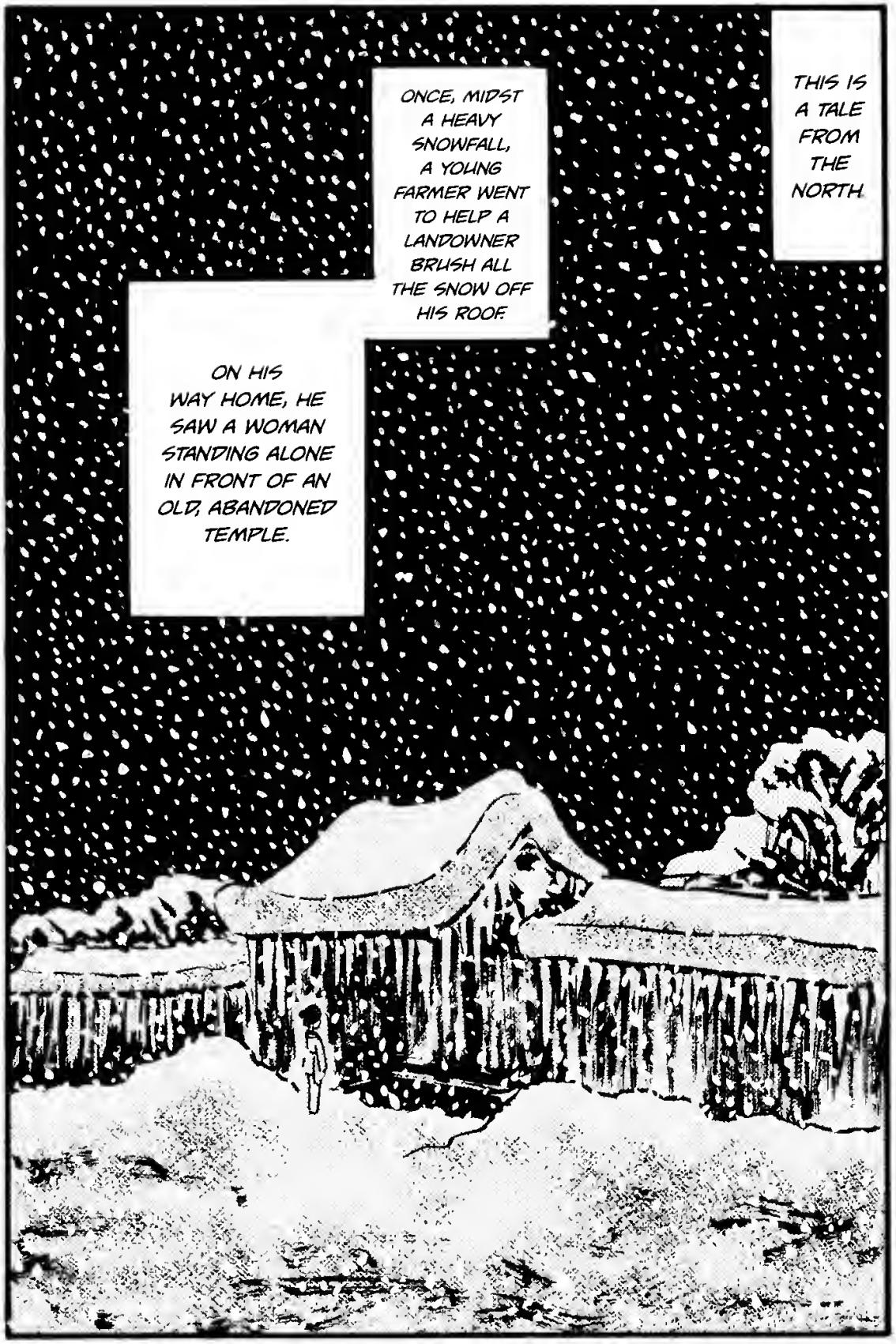
Tale
29

The Beauty in the Snow

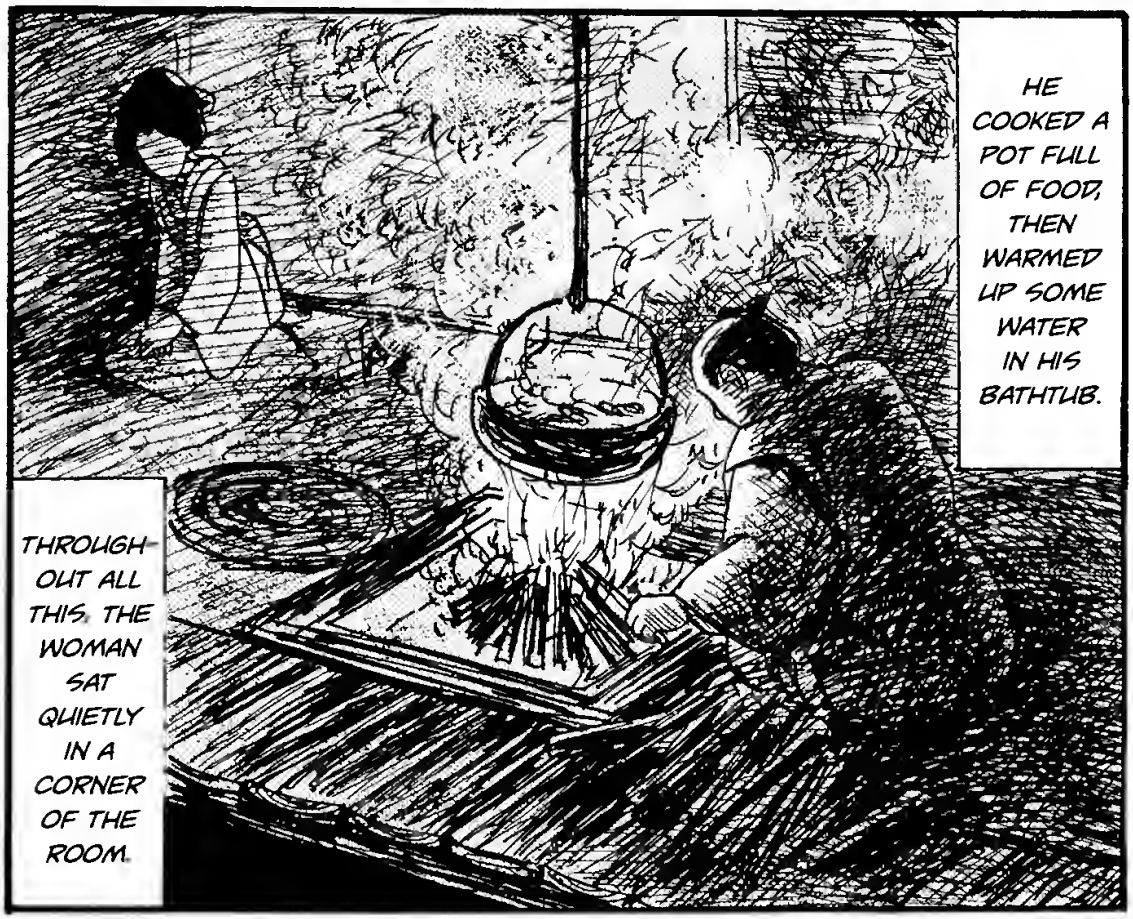



THIS IS A TALE FROM THE NORTH.
ONCE, MIDST A HEAVY SNOWFALL, A YOUNG FARMER WENT TO HELP A LANDOWNER BRUSH ALL THE SNOW OFF HIS ROOF.
ON HIS WAY HOME, HE SAW A WOMAN STANDING ALONE IN FRONT OF AN OLD, ABANDONED TEMPLE.

SHE DIDN'T SEEM TO BE ONE OF THE LOCALS.
HELLO, WHAT ARE YOU DOING? NO ONE LIVES IN THAT TEMPLE ANYMORE.
OH.

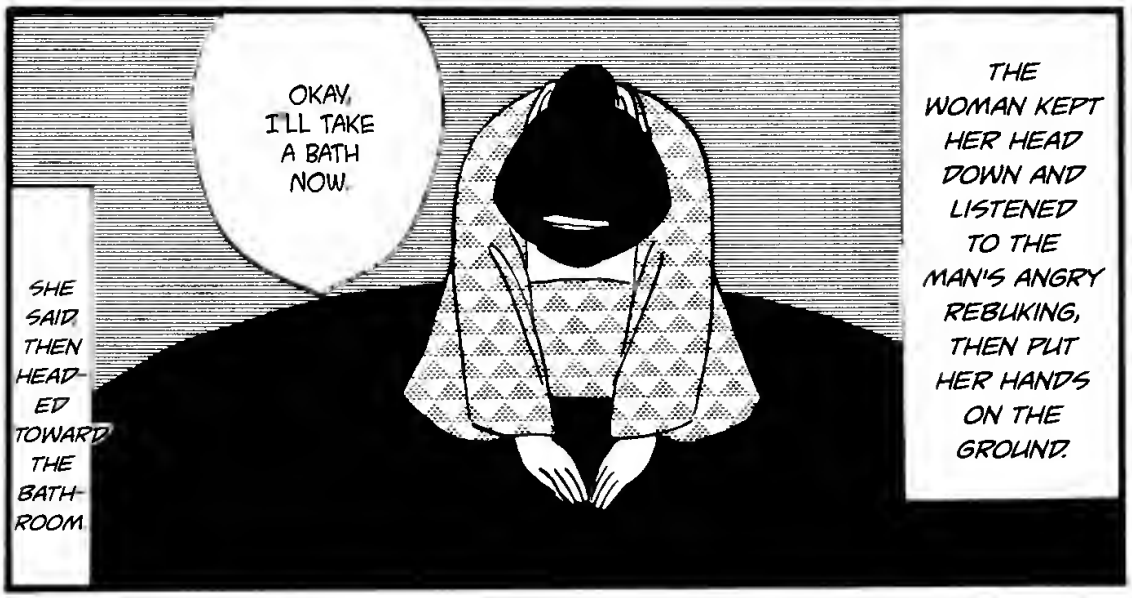
SHE WAS WELL-DRESSED, BUT ALSO LIGHTLY-DRESSED.
AND SINCE SHE HAD BEEN SEEMINGLY STANDING THERE FOR QUITE SOME TIME, HER FACE LOOKED PALE AND FROZEN.
IS THAT SO?
BUT I DON'T KNOW WHERE TO GO.
WHERE ARE YOU STAYING? NIGHTS CAN BE DANGEROUS AROUND HERE, SO LET ME SEE YOU BACK TO YOUR LODGING.
ONCE MORNING COMES, YOU'LL BE ABLE TO SEE AROUND BETTER, SO I'M SURE YOU'LL REMEMBER HOW TO GET BACK TO WHERE YOU CAME FROM.
COME TO MY HOUSE. IT'S NOTHING SPECIAL, BUT IT'S BETTER THAN BEING OUT HERE.
WELL, IF YOU STAY HERE, YOU'LL FREEZE TO DEATH.

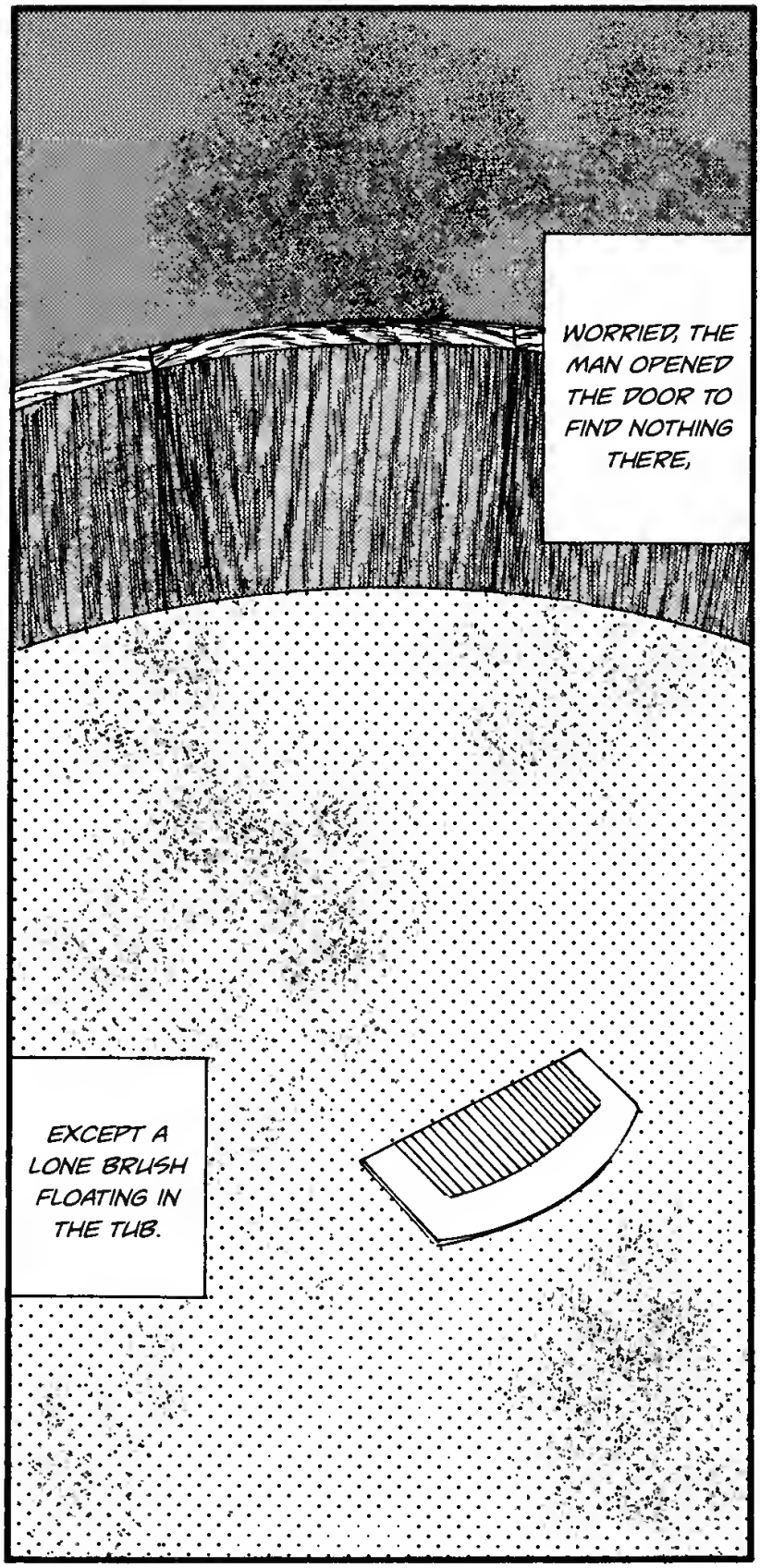
WALKING HOME WITH THE WOMAN MADE THE MAN FORGET ALL ABOUT HIS EXHAUS-TION FROM THE DAY'S WORK,
SO HE CUT SOME FIRE-WOOD AND SEALED UP THE GAPS IN HIS HOUSE TO KEEP OUT THE WIND.


HE COOKED A POT FULL OF FOOD, THEN WARMED UP SOME WATER IN HIS BATHTUB.
THROUGH-OUT ALL THIS, THE WOMAN SAT QUIETLY IN A CORNER OF THE ROOM.

I ALSO WENT OUT OF MY WAY TO GATHER WATER FROM THE RIVER IN ALL THAT SNOW AND MAKE A BATH FOR YOU, YET YOU DON'T SEEM TO WANT TO TAKE ONE.
YOU'RE HORRIBLE.
YOU DON'T MOVE NEAR THE FURNACE NO MATTER HOW MANY TIMES I ADVISE YOU TO, NOR DO YOU PICK UP YOUR CHOPSTICKS.

BUT REFUSING MY KINDNESS HERE IS NOTHING BUT CRUEL.
A CITY WOMAN LIKE YOU MAY NOT LIKE BEING IN A POOR FARMER'S HOUSE LIKE MINE,


OKAY, I'LL TAKE A BATH NOW.
SHE SAID THEN HEADED TOWARD THE BATHROOM.
THE WOMAN KEPT HER HEAD DOWN AND LISTENED TO THE MAN'S ANGRY REBUKING, THEN PUT HER HANDS ON THE GROUND.


WORRIED, THE MAN OPENED THE DOOR TO FIND NOTHING THERE,
EXCEPT A LONE BRUSH FLOATING IN THE TUB.

BUT SHE NEVER RETURNED.
AND SOON, THE SOUNDS OF RUNNING WATER ALSO WENT SILENT.

WONDER-
ING IF
IT WAS
THE SAME
WOMAN,
HE
RUSHED
TOWARD
IT,
SOME TIME
LATER, THE
MAN SAW
A WOMAN
STANDING IN
FRONT OF
THE GATE
ONCE MORE.

ONLY TO
FIND A
BROKEN
ICICLE AS
TALL AS
HE WAS,
PIERCING
THE SNOW.